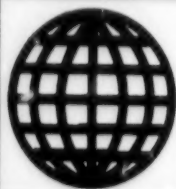


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4 April 1994



**FOREIGN
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JPRS Report

Near East & South Asia

Near East & South Asia

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ALGERIA

Germany Reiterates Policy Toward 'Terrorists'

94AF0123D Algiers EL WATAN in French
23 Feb 94 pp 1, 2

[Article by Omar Berbiche: "Political Asylum in Germany: 11,000 Applications From Algerian Citizens"—first two paragraphs are EL WATAN introduction]

[Text] "Germany's position concerning the situation in Algeria remains unchanged: our country supports neither the fundamentalists nor the terrorists."

This was the reaction of a German official (who wishes to remain anonymous) to the inspection of the weapons loaded on board the Algerian ship El Djorf, a case whose ramifications are said to reach all the way to Germany.

According to the communique issued by security departments, FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] leaders residing in Germany, in particular Djamel Lounici who was named by the above-mentioned sailor, are implicated in this arms deal. For the German official, the existence of "the German connection" mentioned in the Algerian press is a rumor without foundation. He sees it as another manifestation of the will to damage Algerian-German relations, which has become the special goal of some Algerian newspapers.

The accusation is too serious to be ignored, our source estimated. The German side already asked Algerian authorities to provide details of the case, we learned from reliable sources, to enable it to identify Germany's responsibilities and, if the accusations are founded, to decide on the measures to be taken under the law. "Let the Algerian Government give us names, with evidence showing that Algerian citizens residing in Germany are closely or remotely involved in gun running, and we shall make it our own business," they said.

For this German official, it is clear that "my country will tolerate no criminal act on its soil." The federal government's position, he said, is clear: "no support for international terrorism, no matter what its color is."

The same official estimates that, although his country's position with respect to the events that trouble Algeria may seem paradoxical, the explanation is quite simple: Algerian official circles resent the German judiciary's refusal to extradite Rabah Kebir.

This, he said, was a decision of the German judiciary, which is sovereign, and it has nothing to do with the government's position on fundamentalism which, he indicated, is totally unambiguous.

The file submitted by the Algerian judiciary to the German judiciary, he explained, did not contain any evidence warranting Kebir's extradition. Even if such evidence existed, it is said, Kebir could never be extradited to Algeria, but to another country of his choice, because German law does not allow the extradition of an individual sentenced to death in his own country.

"I can understand that this position is not always as well understood in Algeria as would be desirable, that it may have serious political consequences, but there is nothing we can do about it; that is the price we pay for the independence of our judiciary," he observed. For him, the latest

decision prohibiting Rabah Kebir from engaging in political activities while on German soil reflects the government's concern to see Algeria return to peace and stability. Kebir's application for political asylum is still under consideration.

Eleven Thousand Applications From Algerian Citizens

Processing the file may take months, even years, we were told. Kebir's is not an isolated case: last year, the German departments in charge of asylum applications received some 11,000 applications from Algerian citizens claiming to be FIS members and persecuted in Algeria. Nearly 10,000 applications were processed last year, and only about 50 were approved, we were told by a reliable source. In most cases, we were told, the rejected applications come from individuals viewed as economic refugees rather than individuals persecuted for their political opinions. The applications are studied one by one. But it so happens that most applicants who are denied asylum do not leave German soil and simply vanish into the crowd where, as illegal aliens, they evade any government control. Many of them soon find a trick to legalize their situation: they marry, or they provide a medical file.

Sometimes warm, sometimes troubled, relations between Algeria and Germany never managed to achieve the measure of stability that both sides want but that events prevent. Nevertheless, we were told, the federal government clearly supports Algeria's efforts, as it just repeated at the opening of negotiations with the IMF "to find an acceptable solution to the crisis."

Merbah's Assassin Slain; 'Severe' Blow to Region

94AF0123B Algiers EL WATAN in French 14 Jan 94 p 1

[Article by Sofiane Bensalem: "One of Kasdi Merbah's Assassins, Toufik Hattab, Was Killed Yesterday in Benzerga"—first paragraph is EL WATAN introduction]

[Text] One of the leaders of the terrorist group operating in the Ain-Taya/Bordj-El-Bahri area, Toufik Hattab, was killed yesterday on a road near Benzerga, we learned from reliable sources. He was one of the assassins of Kasdi Merbah, president of the MAJD [Algerian Movement for Justice and Development], and Mustapha Abada, the former ENTV director.

Around 1500, a national police patrol was driving past a spot where peddlers are in the habit of setting up their stalls.

Suddenly, the police vehicles were sprayed with bullets. A group of 20 armed men, with Toufik Hattab at their head, had been hiding among the peddlers, waiting for the patrol. The counterattack was fierce.

Three policemen were killed on the spot. Several citizens were seriously wounded. During the chase that started after the encounter, Toufik Hattab was killed. His accomplices fled in stolen cars. A submachine gun was recovered. According to our sources, the weapon belonged to a policeman murdered in March 1992 at Beni-Amrane.

Toufik Hattab, 31, was one of the closest associates of Abdelkader Hattab, also known as Mouloud, 46, a terrorist leader operating in the Boumerdes area.

On several occasions, the Algiers Special Court issued a warrant for his arrest. Toufik trained in guerrilla warfare in Afghanistan for three years. Early in October 1993, after the

preliminary investigation, the security departments discovered that the Hattab group (there are three of them belonging to the same family) was behind the murder of Kasdi Merbah, former prime minister and MAJD president, on 21 August 1993.

Thirty-six persons were arrested. Mazaei Tayeb, technician; Aissa Rachid, imam; and Boukersi Djamel, unemployed; were questioned and brought before the court. They were charged with supporting the Hattab group's activities.

The other three members of this hard core are Berriah Lyes, Tarzout Said, also known as Tolier, and Aissani Ahmed Abdelkader (nicknamed Youcef). Assuredly, the elimination of this dangerous leader is a serious blow to the local terrorist network.

Trial Exposes History, Evolution of GIA

94AF0137B Algiers ALGERIE ACTUALITE in French
1-7 Mar 94 p 6

[Article by Rachid Drif: "GIA (Armed Islamic Group), The First Circle"]

[Text] The name Si-Ahmed Mourad, alias "Djafer El Afghani," appears for the first time in the airport case indictment. But he was not convicted in absentia, nor was he on the list of 57 accused alongside Hocine Abderrahim.

On 26 August 1992, at 0900, two men in a red Renault 4 left Bouzareah heading for Houari Boumediene airport. They had just been to the domicile of Fenouh Karim, who gave them a sack containing a voluminous package. At the wheels of the vehicle was one Boulesbaa Youcef, a veteran of Mustapha Bouyali's MIA [Armed Islamic Movement] sought by police in the mid-1980's and later amnestied along with Chebouti, Meliani, the Baa brothers, Hattab, Moghni.

Accompanying Boulesbaa was a certain Djaafar el Afghani, whose mission was to deposit the sack provided by Fenouh in the airport concourse. A very powerful bomb that was to detonate at 1100. Boulesbaa's job was to telephone airport officials and warn them to have the waiting area evacuated.

At the trial of the Abderrahim group, the indictment—prepared from the interrogations conducted by police and intelligence services, the depositions having been turned over to the magistrate handling the case—contained two different versions of the facts.

First, the confessions of Said Soussene and Meliani Mansouri, arrested before the 26 August attack; second, those of the group subsequently arrested.

The indictment also includes, besides the interrogation reports, two essential documents: a synthesis that includes the organization table of the MIA and names the principal leaders of the terrorist cells; and a concluding section that relates the facts, identifies who was responsible for which crimes in the airport affair, and describes the composition of the armed groups of Chebouti's Islamic movement.

In the synthesis, it is noted that in addition to the MIA, four large groups were active in the Algiers area: the crisis unit responsible for "continuing the political activities of the Islamic front," headed by Redjam, Cherrati, and Said; the "ala al ahd bakoune" (faithful to the oath) movement of Selmane Abassi; and finally two very dangerous groups

specializing in assassination of prominent personalities and agents of the security forces: one headed by Allal Mohamed, alias "Leveille", the other led by Djaafar el Afghani.

The first document identifies the man who placed the bomb as being Zouaoui Djaafar, alias "El-Afghani," who attended one of the first preparatory meetings for the 26 August attack at the home of Boulesbaa in El-Mohammadia, near El-Harrach. Besides Boulesbaa, there were the two Hocine brothers, Abderrahim and Ahmed. However, Zouaoui was not among those indicted, nor was he called as a witness before the special court, nor did his name appear in the list of accomplices in hiding. To this day, his name does not even appear on the list of 22,000 activists being sought by the security forces....

The second document, the conclusion of the indictment supported by a reconstruction of the facts, identifies this same Djaafar el Afghani who planted the explosive device at Dar El-Beida as being Si-Ahmed Mourad, a friend of airport ground mechanic Mechrouk Mohamed, who advised the Abderrahim group.

Mechrouk was not prosecuted either, and doubtless has fled. Hocine Abderrahim has used confusion engendered by the indictment to sow seeds of doubt. The judge made efforts throughout the trial to establish the identity of Zouaoui Djaafar "el Afghani" and his relationship to members of the group.

Abderrahim, who knew that Si-Ahmed alias Zouaoui and Djaafar El Afghani had not been properly identified—the pseudonym Zouaoui confused the trail—went so far as to bluff the judge by asserting that Djaafar El Afghani was an imaginary personage whom he had invented while being tortured.

Soussene Said, arrested on 18 August, about a week before the attack, testified he had met Si-Ahmed Zikioui Brahim, an important member of the Leveille group, at the latter's home in Baraki. Soussene admitted to his companions that he was the instigator of the bomb attacks against ENTV and the police security office for the wilaya of Algiers. It was at that meeting that Si-Ahmed proposed planting a bomb in the control tower of Boumediene International Airport.

Armed Islamic Group

Al Jamaa al islamia al moussalaha, GIA [Armed Islamic Group], born after the uprising of June 1991, was the creation of Mansouri Meliani, a former Bouyali henchman sentenced to death by the state security court, then amnestied by the regime under pressure from Islamists and the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front].

Meliani was born in December 1944 in Khemis El Khechna—he would have been 50 this year—into a modest family of the region. He lived—before the era of the first MIA—in a small dwelling in the Bougara development at Sidi-Moussa. On being released, he made contact with FIS militants and officials. In early 1991, he was given lodgings by Zermane Omar at Amroussa, in Mitidja. Omar, a construction materials merchant, is a habitual criminal well-known to the police. He was part of Allal Mohamed's very first group and prepared hide-outs in the region for them. It was he who built Allal's main hide-out at Harraza on land purchased by the latter from proceeds of several hold-ups committed in metropolitan Algiers. Meliani, who had no

resources, received gifts from Islamists in Algiers: Islamic Front militants gave him lots of money, as did Nahnah. Salah Assad offered him land at Soumaa.

After the June disturbances, Meliani decided to create his own armed group, modeled on the MIA of the 1980s. He called it the GIA, and its governing body was a select Majlis Echoura [advisory council] with himself as emir. The council consisted of six persons: Kaouane Hacene, the "chaabi" singer; Bourahli Saadane, Meliani's brother-in-law; Nacer El Eulmi, brother of the founder of the SIT [Islamic Labor Syndicate]; Lahrani Sid Ahmed, a notorious terrorist with close ties to Allal; the imam of Ouled Yaiche; and a certain Abderrahmane of Benzerga.

The group mounted several operations, including the "admiralty" attack, but was rapidly dismantled after Meliani was arrested in July 1992 in El-Achour, Bouyali's old fiefdom. The same month Zermane was arrested, along with El Hani, a funds collector and agent of Allal, and Hamadache, mufti of the Mitidja group. They gave away the entire composition of the band, while Meliani played straight with the authorities and reconstructed his network of contacts for investigators.

When Allal was killed in September of the same year, the security services quickly deduced that Layada Abdelhaq would become leader of the band's survivors. In six months, 29 very dangerous members of the network were arrested or killed. Layada was "coordinating" several very different cells, but above all he was quite close to Allal. After several months of total silence, communiqués were published in the newspaper EL HAYAT in which Layada, writing under the pseudonym of Abou Adlane, claimed to be leading several armed groups that henceforth would form the GIA. In June 1993 he was arrested in Morocco and extradited to Algiers in greatest secrecy. Actually, investigators wanted to exploit to the maximum the information he provided before publicly announcing his arrival in Algiers.

Third Generation

The Armed Islamic Group pursued a sanguinary strategy in 1993. After bomb attacks, murders of security officers, and attacks on patrols and barracks, even civilians were targeted, especially after the marches against violence and terrorism. Intellectuals and journalists were targeted. Si Mourad, alias Djaafar El Afghani, once again figured in police reports, and information about him was collected when lesser terrorists were nabbed.

Initial conclusions of investigators: He is a very important figure, and cross-checking indicates he instigated the failed attack on Khaled Nezzar. His name keeps popping up in connection with headline-news events such as the attack on Boughzoul barracks; it is linked with a subject named Hammana, arrested and later released in 1992, and with Sayah Attia, 38, the son of a harki [Algerian who served with French forces during the war for liberation] and a cold-blooded killer in his own right; and with Tamesguida, where 12 Croats were slaughtered in cold blood. A new element appears in the modus operandi: GIA terrorists have begun killing with knives: They slit their victims' throats, decapitate them, and mutilate the bodies....

Soon, there were other new targets: foreigners. Si Ahmed masterminded the abduction of three French consular

agents, then had aid cooperators and residents of various nationalities "executed." Industrialists and small merchants were victimized with increasing frequency, and there was little the security services could do about it.

With the passing of Meliani and Layada from the scene, GIA's leadership has passed to a third "generation." Djaafar El-Afghani's group specializes in kidnapping-murders—as for instance in the case of Cheikh Bouslimani, who was found buried with his throat slit, next to an officer who had been kidnapped and decapitated. And there have been dozens more civilians. On Saturday, the hard core of the GIA was brought down—certainly, too, what the specialists call the "first circle": leaders of cells, very active members. What remains, according to this theory of the counterterrorism struggle, are the second and third circles: the thugs and killers, as well as the support groups that shelter the terrorists, provide information, and collect funds before being promoted and starting a new cell.

Djaafar's progress is a case in point. At age 28—he was born in January 1964—he was a small-time operative of the MIA. Eighteen months later, this young musician born in Kouba and raised in Tablat had become the leader of one of Algiers's most murderous gangs.

Relationships Between Armed Groups Discussed

94AF0137A Algiers LIBERTE in French 3 Mar 94 p 2

[Article by Yassine Lahcene: "Autopsy of the Armed Groups"]

[Text] Notwithstanding Anwar Haddam's indignation, whether feigned or real, at the death of Djaafar El-Afghani, divergences between the GIA [Armed Islamic Group] and FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] remain undiminished.

Armed Islamic Movement [MIA], Armed Islamic Group. The death on Saturday of Sid Ahmed Mourad (alias Djaafar El-Afghani, alias Seif Allah), in a spectacular operation mounted by government security forces has revived enmities between the two militant Islamist organizations. It also poses once again the problem of the congeries of armed Islamist groups and their relations with each other and the FIS. Given the paucity of information available on the subject, it is extremely difficult to characterize these relations. Thus far the only light shed on the murky subject of the armed Islamist groups was furnished by the trial of those responsible for the terrorist attack on Algiers airport; everything else is conjecture. It was through the trial, for example, that we learned that [armed] groups had already formed and were prepared to go into action long before the interruption of the January 1992 legislative elections.

The attacks on the border station at Guemmar in November 1991, and against Blida in spring 1990, are proof of that.

One of the groups ready for armed action was Tekfir Ouâ El-Hidjra ("Redemption and Exile" [i.e., declare infidel and withdraw]), led at the time by Ahmed Bouamra ("Ahmed the Pakistani") and Nourredine Seddiki. Composed mainly of "Afghans," the group had declared the Islamist parties "impious" on grounds that voting was against the Shari'ah [Islamic law].

The group was rapidly dismantled by security forces after Seddiki's death in April 1992. Bouamra has vanished into thin air, and people have quit talking about him. The second

group was led by Allel Mohamed, alias Moh Leveilley, a young Hussein-Dey merchant and cabaret habitue who joined the FIS when it was riding high. He formed his group during the FIS insurrection of June 1991, joining forces with Ben Mekhebi Fethi (alias Abou Doujana), Nourredine Bouferra, Ben Tebbiche, and Abdelhak Layada, his successor.

The third group ready for armed action was led by Mansouri Meliani, who was tried for the airport attack, sentenced to death, and executed last August.

By his own admission to the Special Court of Algiers, he had established his "Djamaat Islamiya Moussalaha" (Armed Islamic Groups) about the same time as Moh Leveilley. The decision was taken, he explained, when security forces tried to restore the motto "By the people and for the people" to the facades of the APCs [People's Communal Assemblies] in place of the Islamist motto the FIS had substituted. The restoration, it will be recalled, resulted in some nasty confrontations between security forces and Islamist militants.

Meliani said it was these confrontations that had prompted him to action, not the arrest of the FIS directorate, whom he accuses of "compromising with the regime."

Meliani then made contact with Sid Ahmed Lahrani, imam of El Feth de Bab El-Oued mosque, who was killed in March 1993 at El-Biar; Abdel Nasser Leulmi, a teacher at the CEM [College of Intermediate Studies] of Bordj El-Bahri, killed in September 1992; Si Ahmed Mourad (Djaafar El-Afghani); a certain Abdelhalim of Benzerga; and the imam Cheikh Nacer from Ouled Yaich. Meliani explained that in order to avoid the mistakes committed by Mustapha Bouyali, precursor of the armed struggle, he opted to recruit his people first and weapons later. He organized his movement by naming three coordinators: Lahrani (Center), Si-Ahmed Mourad (East), and Leulmi (West). The group won notoriety in February 1992 with the attack on the naval repair station near the Admiralty in Algiers, an attack that left seven soldiers, a policeman, and two attackers dead.

The groups headed by Bouamra, Allel, and Meliani are unique in that in addition to being independent of each other they have also managed to avoid being controlled by the FIS.

That was not the case with the Armed Islamic Movement (MIA) led by Chebouti, or the Haraket addawla al islamiya (HDI) led by Said Mekhloufi, who were close to the Islamist party. When the leaders of that movement—notably Mohamed Said and Abdelrezak Redjam—escaped the clutches of the law and opted for armed struggle, they realized they could not count on Said Mekhloufi or Omar Eulmi (founder of the SIT [Islamic Labor Syndicate] and brother of Abdel Nasser, who was killed in April 1993) to unify all the groups. So they picked Abdelkader Chebouti, whose past actions had made him rather a legend in his own time. Chebouti let himself be convinced. Mekhloufi and the Eulmi brothers did not oppose him. Hocine Abderrahim, principal instigator of the airport attack, later sentenced to death and executed, and Bennouis and Guitli, two long-time Bouyali confederates who later joined the FIS, also supported the decision. But Meliani and Allel balked.

An initial effort at unification was made in April 1992, at a meeting held in Zbarbar. The meeting was hosted by a group

active in the Bouira region headed by a certain Hocine Moutadjer. In addition to the latter, the meeting was attended by Chebouti, Meliani, Mekhloufi, Omar Eulmi, Abderrahim, Abdelkader Bennouis, and Guitli; Allel Mohamed did not attend. The meeting created a formal structure for the armed movement: Chebouti was made national emir, Meliani national coordinator, Mekhloufi director of military affairs, Eulmi the mufti, and Moutadjer and a certain "Bouratili" treasurers. Guitli and Bennouis were put in charge of the political and information commission, and Abderrahim was made coordinator of the Algiers region, with Said Soussene (later sentenced to death and executed) and Djamel Ressaf (now a fugitive, recently expelled from France) as his deputies; Kamr Eddine Kherbane (now a member of the FIS executive body in exile) was chosen in absentia to handle external affairs. But two days after the meeting, Meliani went back on his promises and withdrew (as he put it) his allegiance to Chebouti.

On the ground, in terms of operations, Allel's group has been responsible for the most bloodshed. He was assisted by Soussene, who participated in an ambush in which five policemen were killed in July 1992 at Boudouaou. His arrest led to the dismantling of Allel's group, 10 of whom were killed at their hide-out in Baba Hassen in August 1992. Before that operation, the security forces had struck another spectacular blow on 27 July 1992 with the arrest of Mansouri Meliani. These two events shifted the balance of power, and Chebouti was once again in the strongest position. Moreover, he had just received word of fresh support from Ali Benhadj, who said in a "fetwa" smuggled out of prison that if he were released he would place himself at Chebouti's orders. The meeting at Tamezguida on 31 August 1992 was supposed to consecrate his ascendancy. Allel Mohamed, weakened by the loss of 10 members of his group, agreed to come to Tamezguida accompanied by two of his deputies, Abdelhak Layada (now in prison) and Nourredine Bouferra. But the meeting was aborted due to a security sweep of the area that resulted in the death of Allel and his deputy Bouferra. The meeting could not be held, and Layada took Allel's place. The apprehension of the latter, who was suspected of giving certain names to the authorities—notably Si-Ahmed Lakraoui and Yekhllef Cherati (arrested at his El-Harrach hide-out in February 1993)—opened the way for Djaafar El-Afghani, who apparently inherited all the survivors from El-Hidjra Oua El-Tekfir (whose philosophy he also appropriated), the Allel group, and the Meliani group, which had picked him, as noted previously, to be eastern coordinator of the Djamaate Islamiya Moussalaha. The preeminent role of Djaafar El-Afghani was also confirmed by Layada himself in an interview with the daily EL MOUDJAHID last October, during the hearing before the magistrate of the Special Court of Algiers. Layada also said in the interview that he had headed a group of 600 men in various locations around the country.

The relations between Layada and the FIS are rather tumultuous—especially with the children of Abassi Madani and with Rabah Kebir, whom Layada accuses of having diverted millions of dollars he claims were earmarked for the armed groups. His "mufti," Omar Leulmi, in a cassette circulated clandestinely, rejected all the pretensions of exiled FIS leaders to speak for Islamists, going so far as to threaten them with death.

The death of Omar Leulmi, followed several weeks later by Layada's arrest, seems not to have altered relations between the latter's successor and the FIS. Proof came with the assassination of former prime minister Kasdi Merbah, an act for which GIA claimed responsibility while the FIS blamed it on the security forces. It was thanks to this assassination that the GIA came to dominate the political and media scene. Subsequently, the GIA was to claim the 24 October 1993 abduction of three French consular agents and the assassination of Mohamed Bouslimani, who apparently had refused to issue a "fetwa" endorsing the murders committed by the organization. The deadly attacks against foreigners that have taken 21 lives since 1 December are attributed to GIA, which had presented one of the three French consular agents an ultimatum giving foreigners a month to leave Algeria on pain of death. The ultimatum indicated that there would be no more "warnings or abductions" and that it would be "more violent than in Egypt."

The deadline was scrupulously observed, and two days after its expiry a Spaniard was slain on the road between Khemis Miliana and Berrouaghia. The most recent victim of this series of killings that has taken 21 lives is Joaquim Grau, assassinated in his bookstore on Rue Didouche Mourad on 22 February.

Before the deadline expired, two French surveyors, three Latin American technicians, and two Soviet training officers had been assassinated at Sidi Bel-Abbes, Tiaaret, and Laghouat, respectively. The murder of the two French surveyors was officially attributed to a group called "Unified Companies of the Jihad" headed by a former "Afghan," Kada Benchiha, apparently affiliated with the GIA. A different group that seems to be wreaking havoc in the Titteri and Ouarsenis regions is headed by another "Afghan," Sayeh Attia, famous as the author of the murder of 12 Croats last December as well as the ambush that cost the life of the wali of Tissemsilt and his companion. Since Si Ahmed Mourad, Kada Benchiha, and Sayeh Attia all three saw action in Afghanistan, it is quite likely they are all members of the same organization. There is also a striking similarity in their methods of execution: slitting their victims' throats and atrociously mutilating the bodies. Politically, GIA has distinguished itself by its mistrust of all Islamist leaders who want a dialogue with the authorities, threatening them with "the worst of deaths" and affirming, in two successive communiques, that "the mujahidin are in command." When Anwar Haddam and Rabah Kebir for the first time condemned assassinations of intellectuals, the GIA replied by warning its supporters against "djamaate who have been seduced by media celebrity and the lure of power" and "forgotten the oath of unity in the ranks of the mujahidin." Rejecting contacts between the regime and the FIS as "maneuvers designed to stop the jihad," the GIA communique accused Said Mekhloufi of being an undercover agent of Algerian security and claimed his goal was to foment an implosion in the ranks of the mujahidin. The GIA claims to have thwarted the plot and executed 70 infiltrators. It promises the same fate to their "chief," Said Mekhloufi. The FIS has reciprocated the accusation of working with the security services. "GIA does not belong to the FIS. I find that this movement has sometimes claimed credit for curious things, such as the murder of Kasdi Merbah, which everyone knows was the work of the regime," says Kamr Eddine Kherbane, who as noted above

is a member of the FIS executive body overseas, and was given responsibility for the movement's "external affairs" at the April 1992 meeting in Zbarbar.

In an interview last December with the French weekly NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR, Kherbane, a former air force officer who served as chief of security for the FIS, announced the birth of the Islamic Army of Salvation (AIS), which he considers "the only armed branch of the FIS." According to Kherbane, the AIS now includes Chebouti's MIA and Said Mekhloufi's HDI.

In a situation in which responsibility for attacks is seldom claimed, it is difficult to establish how much of the activity is this organization's doing. But observers agree in saying it is strongest in the mountains of Bouzegza, Zbarbar, and the Jijelien region.

However that may be, the frictions between AIS and GIA are so acute that analysts concluded—overbastily and ineptly—that the death of Djaafar El-Afghani resulted from an informer's tip triggered by these divergences.

This sparked a quite virulent reaction from Anwar Haddam, who several weeks ago called for an end to the terrorist attacks. According to Mr. Haddam, the death of Djaafar El-Afghani—whom he described as the "mujahid commander"—was an "assassination" that imperils dialogue between the regime and the FIS. "Dialogue would be pointless if the regime perseveres in the liquidation of innocents," he says in a communique reported by AFP.

Haddam's statement may only reflect panic at the prospect of possible GIA reprisals to avenge its leaders. But whatever it represents, it has done nothing to attenuate dissensions between the GIA and the FIS. And there is no doubt that if the latter agreed publicly to give evidence against Djaafar El-Afghani's organization, its power to do ill would diminish, since it would then be constrained to act openly. Unless Haddam's reaction was just the prelude to a rapprochement meant to strengthen his hand in talks with the regime. Although there is no basis as yet for predicting what position the dissolved Islamist movement will take toward the GIA, it is safe to say it is not going to break with Chebouti's organization. If negotiations between the regime and the FIS continue, the fate of Chebouti and his confederates will have to be discussed. Thus the head of the MIA, already the recipient of Chadli Bendjedid's favor, would have an excellent chance of escaping further criminal prosecution. But here we cross the line into political fiction.

Goods Blocked at Algiers Port

94AF0123A Algiers EL WATAN in French 23 Feb 94 p 4

[Article signed K.D.: "Port of Algiers: Unbearably Congested"—first paragraph is EL WATAN introduction]

[Text] The authorities heard the alarm signal set off some time ago, concerning the congestion of the Algiers quays. The prime minister, accompanied by the transport minister, made a point of inspecting the port of Algiers in person, during a surprise visit yesterday.

During his tour, Mr. Redha Malek was informed by EPAL [Algiers port authority] officials of the degree of completion of the container terminal construction project, of the port development strategy and, of course, of the considerable delays in unloading and delivering goods.

At present, 140,000 tons of goods are stored on the quays and in the hangars, waiting for their owners to come and get them. This excessive use of storage areas, therefore, considerably hampers the port traffic, even though all maritime activities are directly affected by the recession.

For instance, 30,000 tons of lumber and iron, most of which were imported by Metalsider, Cosider and Enab, are awaiting delivery.

In addition, 3,800 containers containing household appliances, agricultural, chemical, and food products, and vehicles are awaiting an improbable delivery.

This situation is due to the dilapidated state of the handling and processing facilities. The port of Algiers has about 80 cranes, much more than half of which are broken down.

Forklifts are not doing any better; most of them do not work. The congestion at the port is also due to the small depth of casting off stations.

Since the port has not been dredged for many years, the average water depth has decreased from 11 to 6 meters. High-draft ships must sometimes wait until a dock of suitable size becomes free.

Actually, ship traffic decreased by 4.63 percent in 1993. During that year, 473 ships docked at Algiers, compared with 496 the year before.

Paradoxically, the EPAL is doing better, financially, under these crisis conditions.

Its net results showed a 19.1-percent increase.

But this performance is the result of increases in port tariffs. In other words, the port authority still must solve a major problem: that of congestion. The government is expected to take measures to do just that.

Increase in Crime, Sabotage Reported

94AF0123C Algiers EL WATAN in French
27 Feb 94 pp 1, 3

[Article by Sofiane Bensalem: "Schools and Public Buildings: Upsurge in Sabotage"—first two paragraphs are EL WATAN introduction]

[Text] The first half of the month of Ramadan was particularly bloody. At a time when Algerians aspired to "return to a state of calm" in a period of devotion favorable to meditation and solidarity, terrorism showed its claws. With rare ferocity.

We even had the impression that the armed groups, cornered and losing ground among the population, threw all their forces into the battle this month.

Result: an unbelievable increase in attacks and assassinations, especially in the Algiers area, and therefore an ever longer victims list, in spite of the vigilance and fighting spirit of the police, who remain mobilized to prevent the worst from happening.

Therefore, there were deaths, many deaths during these first two weeks of Ramadan, but also many acts of economic and cultural sabotage. In fact, simultaneously with the assassinations that they commit with a violence and an atrocity

that are beyond all understanding, the fundamentalists were out to destroy public enterprises and schools by setting them on fire.

The security departments indicated that, during the last 48 hours only, several companies and schools were destroyed by terrorists. In the Blida area, four schools, the seat of an APC [People's Communal Assembly], and that of a state-owned asphalt company were set on fire.

In the Tipaza governorate, the rolling enclosure of a state-owned company, a school, and a telephone distributing frame were also destroyed through arson. At Relizane and throughout Algeria, we can see the same devastation, the "scorched earth" which, by force of circumstances, has become the terrorists' macabre signature. From another source, we learned that about 20 schools were destroyed since the beginning of the year, while 100 or so teachers were killed by terrorists, often under particularly atrocious conditions.

The toll is already heavy. Citizens no longer know where to turn, as they are subjected daily to a veritable terror psychosis. What can they do in such an atmosphere? This question is on everyone's mind as we face a very dangerous upsurge in fundamentalist activism, which obviously intends to gain ground in order to prevent democratic society from expressing itself.

It is through fear and systematic destruction that the fundamentalists challenge the new government. That is also the proof that their arguments do not carry much weight compared with the social and economic realities of Algeria, which essentially rejects criminals.

Absence of Political Activity Criticized

94AF0116A Algiers EL WATAN in French
17 Feb 94 pp 1, 3

[Commentary by Cherif Ouazani: "Disturbing Political Vacuum"; first paragraph is EL WATAN introduction]

[Text] The absence of the parties from the national conference was abundantly commented on by observers, but their absence from everyday life in the real world goes unnoticed. Is the unending need to obtain authorization from the governorate for any meeting the reason why the political class is shrinking to nothing more than the parties' administrative staffs?

The regime is granting itself a grace period that everyone is refusing to give it, and the government is remaining quiet while Algerian society is being shaken by a deafening silence. Does that sound bite, addressed by Youcef Khatib to the leadership of the FLN [National Liberation Front] with the assertion that it is afraid of the terrorists, apply to the entire political class? We do not wish to make that class out to be more diabolical than it is, but the question is unavoidable when one notes the disappearance of all party activity at the rank-and-file level—in those parties that even have a rank and file. Party offices in the country's interior remain hopelessly closed, and in the eyes of the citizens, the only political debate is the bloody confrontation between the security forces and armed groups. Some parties use the argument that it is difficult to obtain authorization from the governorate and are calling for an end to the state of emergency, thus minimizing the seriousness of the security

situation, while paradoxically deploring the absence of the state. The state, besieged on all sides, makes a pretense of being present through its police forces, its DEC [expansion not given] agents who do what they can with what they are given when they do not get shot like rabbits, and officials who do not lose sight of the fact that they are first and foremost servants of that state.

But the state is also a very quiet government in the face of the almost exclusive presence in the field of terrorists who exchange civilities with speculators who have never lost their money or their sense of direction. The armed groups have not granted the new government a grace period, but it seems to be taking one anyway.

Zeroual has not yet met with his former colleagues for a Council of Ministers meeting, and government activity is shrinking steadily away.

The president of the state (certainly an incorrect translation of chief of state, but we are still the only republic where "chief of state" is not the same as "president of the republic") reportedly arrives at his office early to work on the dossiers, but it cannot be said that those dossiers are completely unfamiliar to him, so why does he give the impression of being mute in response to the new upsurge of feelings of insecurity among Algerians?

Is it because he is completely absorbed in reorganizing the office of the president's staff? Or is it the problem of providing this government with a base of popular support? If so, this is the time to reoccupy the terrain that seems to have been abandoned by the political parties as well and reconquer areas that have been left for too long in the hands of populism and demagoguery.

Because except for the dissolved FIS [Islamic Salvation Front], which still holds those citadels through certain mosques that have evaded control by the "nidhara," and the FFS [Socialist Forces Front], which maintains a quite active internal political life by regularly sponsoring debates between its Executive Committee and its rank and file, the rest of the political class is active more through press communiques or interviews than through political activity in the field.

The strength of the FLN, for example, lies less in its mobilization capability than in the means at its disposal for paralyzing important sectors of the economy with the aid of men who have survived in the major decisionmaking centers despite the earthquakes of the past.

The Islamists in HAMAS [National Society for Guidance and Reform] and al-Nahdah are continuing to fish for members among the FIS rank and file even though they, too, are not active in the field.

The fact that Nahnah and Djaballah agree today in calling for a shortening of the transitional period, something on which they reached agreement during the successive phases of dialogue, is more a matter of strategy than of tactics—in other words, they will always agree even though they follow different paths (and voices).

The RCD [Rally for Culture and Democracy], traumatized by the assassination of its national secretary, Rachid Tighziri, has sunk into painful silence.

Added to its bereavement are the intrigues surrounding the claims to represent culture and identity that have the MCB [Berber Cultural Movement] as their focus.

That has the disadvantage of unnecessarily stirring up a rank and file whose understanding of the political nuances between two groups claiming the same acronym is diminishing steadily.

Ettahaddi [offshoot of the Socialist Vanguard Party] is still the first to express its stand on current events, but it appears that the fierce attacks on that party's members by the armed groups have caused it to return to near-underground status, thus preventing it from engaging in open political activity.

As for the other parties, their credibility with the media—because it cannot decently be said that they have credibility with the public—is in proportion to the charisma of their individual leaders.

Meanwhile, the citizen, faced with the government's silence and the absence of the parties, will have to contend with speculators using the only weapon at his disposal: refusal to buy. As for his willingness to mobilize against terrorism, that is a subject for a separate debate.

TUNISIA

Statistics Show Drop in Poverty Rate

94AF0126A Tunis LA PRESSE DE TUNISIE in French
21 Feb 94 p 3

[Article by Foued Allani: "Social Development: Marked Retreat of Poverty"—first paragraph is LA PRESSE DE TUNISIE introduction]

[Text]

- In 1990, 6.7 percent of Tunisians were considered poor, compared with 33 percent in 1967.
- From 1987 to 1991, total State assistance amounted to 12,140,000 dinars[D], i.e., 18 percent of the gross domestic product.
- 101,000 families were covered by the National Program of Aid to Needy Families [PNAFN], receiving on the average D250 per year per family in 1992, i.e., 178 percent more than in 1987.

Poverty has "retreated markedly in Tunisia." This is what Mr. Abdellatif Ben Kilani, director at the Ministry of Social Affairs, stated at the national seminar on food and nutrition policy planning recently organized in Tunis by the Ministry of Agriculture, with the collaboration of the Ministry of Health and the FAO [UN Food and Agriculture Organization].

Presenting a study on the present status and the future of the National Program of Aid to Needy Families (PNAFN), Mr. Ben Kilani indicated that, based on the threshold calculated by the National Statistics Institute (INS), "the underprivileged percentage dropped from 33 percent in 1967 to 22.2 percent in 1975, from 12.9 percent in 1980 to 7.7 percent in 1985, and to 6.7 percent in 1990, representing 82,000 families at present, or about 544,000 individuals."

The official commented on the phenomenon, ascribing it to the country's economic growth as well as to "a genuine

political will to fight poverty, which resulted in many programs" being implemented.

The officials classified these programs according to their goals: prevention, integration, or assistance.

For instance, "some programs specifically geared to the poor provide direct aid or subsidies and support the creation of income sources. Others, universal in scope, play a decisive part in fighting poverty, either by preserving the purchasing power or by improving living conditions. Others, finally, aim rather to prevent poverty," the official explained.

As a result, during the Seventh Plan (1987-1991), State expenditures in this respect totaled 18 percent of the GDP, or D12,140,000. This is a very high figure, the official noted.

Yet, he pointed out, "the State's efforts to eradicate poverty go beyond mere operational programs and also take the form of legislative measures."

Among these, Mr. Ben Kilani mentioned "tax exemptions granted to lowest income categories and specific benefits with respect to credit, which result in a considerable loss of revenues for the State."

The official also mentioned "policies with an obvious social dimension, such as education, vocational training, or family planning, which have an immediate or deferred impact on the disadvantaged."

Direct efforts to assist needy families through regular or occasional aid are easier to quantify.

As an example of occasional aid for the year 1992, the official quoted the following figures:

- D3.606 million were distributed to 40,000 needy families on the occasion of religious holidays;
- D15.5 million were distributed at the beginning of the school year, on behalf of 305,000 students from needy families.

This, of course, was in addition to aid in kind, such as meals provided by the IFTAR [expansion not given].

As for regular aid, it includes essentially food provided to poor young students in the most disadvantaged areas. This is subsidized in part by the World Food Program [WFP], with the State paying for the rest.

Thus, the official mentioned that 1,350 school cafeterias currently provide meals for 223,480 primary school students, i.e., 16.3 percent of all primary school students.

As far as cash is concerned, regular aid is mostly provided by the PNAFN. It is intended for "families that are totally destitute and without resources, large families with limited resources, and the old or handicapped with no one to support them."

In his speech, Mr. Ben Kilani analyzed the PNAFN components, adding a few recommendations on how to improve its services. The program, he indicated, covered 101,000 families in 1992. Each family received on the average D250, i.e., a 178-percent increase compared with 1987.

[Box, p 3]

A Profile of the Disadvantaged

What are actually the characteristics of Tunisian disadvantaged populations?

Referring to the 1990 INS survey, Mr. Abdellatif Ben Kilani, director at the Ministry of Social Affairs, made the following observations:

- "The disadvantaged represent a very variable percentage of the population, depending on the social class and job category of the household head: 19 percent among the unemployed active population, and 2 percent among craftsmen and independent workers. Actually, in addition to these two categories, poverty affects nonfarm workers (249,000), farm workers (98,000), retired and other nonactive individuals (51,000), and farmers (32,000)."
- "Since the last decade, poverty has assumed new forms; in fact, it has become more urban than rural (67 percent currently compared with 33 percent during the first two decades)."
- "It affects not only those who cannot work, but also women and workers in the informal sector."
- "The poverty rate exceeds 10 percent in the west while remaining below 5 percent in coastal areas."

Recommendations for State Family Aid Program

94AF0126B Tunis LA PRESSE DE TUNISIE in French
21 Feb 94 p 3

[Article by Foued Allani: "Aid to Needy Families: A Program Deserving Support"]

[Text] Covering 101,000 families since 1992, the National Program of Aid to Needy Families (PNAFN) has distributed an average of 250 dinars[D] per family per year, i.e., 178 percent more than in 1987.

Created in 1986, the PNAFN was designed to help needy families living below the poverty level and whose purchasing power may deteriorate now that staple product prices are being adjusted.

This program "is part of the auxiliary measures provided under the economic recovery plan in order to alleviate the social impact of the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) on poor populations, living below the poverty level."

Thus, in 1986 and 1992, the PNAFN spent as much as D93.834 millions, and projected 1993 expenditures alone amounted to D26.26 millions.

According to a Ministry of Social Affairs survey of 61,000 heads of households covered by this program, the recipients are as follows:

- 57 percent are women;
- 52 percent are over 60;
- 17.5 percent are handicapped;
- 3 percent are covered by Social Security;
- 18 percent had a paying job at the time of the survey (15.2 percent on construction sites, 4.5 percent in agriculture, and 1 percent in services).

That last figure, according to the speaker, reflected one of the inadequacies of the programs, which suffers from some problems in targeting recipients.

Therefore, since 10 May 1993, the ministry has undertaken an exhaustive survey of the 101,000 families covered by the program and of another 59,000 families eligible for aid, in order to update and overhaul the program and set up local, regional, and central files on poverty.

Since that program alone is not adequate to ensure the social advancement of needy families, the Ministry of Social Affairs believes that it must be supported by additional efforts. For his part, Mr. Abdellatif Ben Kilani, director at the Ministry of Social Affairs, made the following suggestions:

- "To make all participants aware of the social dimension of any development efforts, and to improve the identification capacity of social advancement projects."
- "To finance social advancement programs essentially through solidarity (private efforts, especially foundations and non-governmental organizations)."
- "To associate nongovernment organizations to the application and management of social advancement projects."
- "To adopt a consensual approach as to which indicators are to be used by the various participants."

Bizerte Crop Statistics Reported

94AF0126C Tunis LA PRESSE DE TUNISIE in French
21 Feb 94 p 5

[Article signed S.A.M.: "Bizerte Development; Agriculture: Deficits and Records"—first two paragraphs are LA PRESSE DE TUNISIE introduction]

[Text] Since early last fall, all weather data pointed to a difficult year for agriculture, so much so that waiting for rain became the major concern of all Tunisians. Even children were talking about it, asking questions, and welcoming the first drops of the showers that belatedly restored the hopes of many people.

Today, right at mid-season, now that the die is cast and the major crop campaign is well under way, how are things, especially in the Bizerte area, one of the country's granaries? Based on current data, was there enough rain, shall we have a good grain harvest and enough fodder?

Rain Deficit

According to agriculture experts, the rainfall recorded in the Bizerte area from the beginning of the season until the end of last January reached the 244.4-mm mark; this represents a 36.6-percent deficit of 167.6 mm, because 418.45 mm of rain fell over the area during the season 1992-93.

On the other hand, the number of rainy days decreased rather appreciably: 39 days compared with an average of 62 days for the period in question.

In addition, on 21-23 January, the Bizerte area was far more affected than the rest of the country by violent winds exceeding 95 km per hour, an unusual rise in the maximum temperature (estimated at 5.3 degrees), and an estimated 98.4-percent increase of the water evaporation rate.

Input and Seed: A Small But Real Gap

The chemical fertilizer needs of the Bizerte area are estimated at 220,000 quintals of Ammonitrite [ammonium

nitrate fertilizer on plaster], 111,000 quintals of 45-percent phosphate, and 75,000 quintals of DAP [diammonium phosphate].

However, until 31 January, the quantities available were much below the above requirements, amounting to only 110,000 quintals of Ammonitrite, 63,000 quintals of phosphate, and 52,000 quintals of DAP for the area—not including, of course, the stocks of the Tunisian Chemical Fertilizer Company, estimated at 9,200 quintals of Ammonitrite and phosphate.

As for the quantities of high-grade seed offered by distribution centers, as of 31 January 1994 they amounted to 18,947 quintals, whereas the program prepared by the general directorate of vegetable production mentioned a total of 26,000 quintals; the realization rate, therefore, is 72.9 percent.

Note in addition that 17,521 quintals of choice seed had been distributed by 25 January 1994.

All these data (bad weather and irregular supplies of agricultural input and choice seed) slightly affected the season's good progress for major crops, truck crops, and tree growers, eventually leaving unaffected only the potato crop—which actually benefitted from the balmy weather of December and January—and the bulk of truck crops.

Major Crops: Wait and Hope

During the 1993-94 season, an estimated 156,000 hectares [ha] were cultivated, compared with a projected 185,000 ha, hence an overall 84.6-percent realization rate.

A little over one-half of this area (i.e., 88,265 ha) was devoted to grain (soft and hard wheat, barley, and triticale), i.e., 1,195 ha less than during the previous season; this, experts agree, is insignificant compared to the effect of late and inadequate rainfall.

Concerning fodder, we can also say that the deficit is very small because about 48,500 ha in the area were planted in fodder crops this year (compared with projections of 55,500 ha and last season's figure of 50,470 ha), and since the State was able to make up for it by guaranteeing adequate barley and bran supplies to livestock breeders.

On the other hand, legumes and industrial crops seem to have been most severely affected and set back by the inadequate rainfall: only 17,235 ha could be planted with legumes (compared with 29,890 ha in 1992-93), and 476 ha with industrial crops (compared with 2,705 ha last year).

Similarly, tree growing programs were also affected by the weather, resulting in a relatively late start of the season; as of 31 January 1994, 120 ha had been planted in the area's common tree varieties (almond, apple, pear, plum, peach, pomegranate, and olive trees), whereas the 1993-94 program provided for 700 ha being planted with fruit trees.

Potatoes: Record Results

The potato crop, for its part, largely exceeded all previous averages, with 1,020 ha planted in late season, and early potatoes.

This appreciable increase is due mostly to the latter variety, which takes up 420 ha this year, compared with a previous

average of 280 ha. This is because of the higher temperatures that prevailed last December and January and because of profitable sales of main season's potatoes and the arrival of fall potatoes on the market.

As far as the former variety is concerned, we should note that the acreage under cultivation amounts to 600 ha. Projected production amounts to 8,100 tons, or 15 tons per hectare with irrigation and 8 tons without; 85 percent of the crop was harvested and harvesting operations still go on.

For the other early greenhouse vegetables, programs continue at a steady rate and 15.5 ha were already planted with peppers, tomatoes, strawberries, and cucumbers.

We should also note that 2,800 ha were planted with various vegetables (including 690 ha just for artichokes) despite the relative lack of rainfall.

However, agricultural departments estimate that this leaves a deficit of 32 percent for garlic, 46 percent for broad beans, and 33 percent for green onions.

This being said, if all these figures seem somewhat pessimistic, we should still not jump to conclusions; just consider the considerable rainfall of the first two weeks of February and the rain that cannot fail to fall over the area and over the country (we fervently wish it will) next March, which will be worth its weight in gold for all agricultural varieties.

At this stage in the season, the only possible conclusion is that, although it may not break records, the year will not be as bad as we might be inclined to believe. Isn't greenery already covering our land?

Bizerte Regional Council Announces Budget

94AF0126D Tunis LA PRESSE DE TUNISIE in French
21 Feb 94 p 6

[Unattributed article: "Meeting of the Bizerte Governorate Regional Council: Solutions to Several Social Problems"]

[Text] The Bizerte governorate regional council held its first meeting of 1994 last Saturday; the meeting was chaired by Mr. Mohamed Soudani, governor of Bizerte, and attended by the general secretary of the RCD [Democratic Constitutional Rally] coordination committee, and delegates and officials from regional technical and administrative departments.

At the meeting, the council amended the 1993 budget. The council also reviewed the progress of various 1993 economic and social programs and current year's programs, to which an estimated budget of 100.9 million dinars[D] was allocated (compared with D172 million in 1992 and 1993).

The council also declared itself pleased with the major initiatives taken on a regional and national scale in order to boost the spirit of solidarity during Ramadan, which resulted in D170,000 worth of aid for the underprivileged (this amount will be distributed to 6,863 needy families). Add to this the effective support offered by the seven solidarity restaurants opened in Bizerte, Menzel Bourguiba, Zarzouna, and Tinja to help 820 disadvantaged individuals.

The governorate has also received a large quantity of clothing, for distribution to these 820 citizens.

Similarly, the governor informed the council that a solution had been found to several other social problems, like those

involving workers at the Ichkeul quarries, closed because of damage to the environment, or the dockers of the Bizerte commercial harbor.

On the other hand, the council took note with pleasure of the 17-percent drop in additional job applications, which totaled 3,394 in 1993 compared with 3,983 the year before; this was due to a decrease in the number of school dropouts and an increase in the number of young people applying for training in the area's various vocational schools.

Apart from that, a study of the economy disclosed that planned 1994 regional investments amounted to D100.9 million, of which 60 percent will be allocated to productive sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, and the industry, 28 percent to basic community facilities, and 6.4 percent to cleaning up and pollution control.

Speaking of the tourism sector, the governor stated that construction of at least two hotels will start in 1994, the owners having completed all required procedures, whereas, two other tourism developers are about to complete their applications.

REPUBLIC OF YEMEN

Despite Optimism, Possibility of Civil War Rises

94AE0086B Paris AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI in Arabic
31 Dec 93 pp 27-29

[Text] The question posed in Yemen today is no longer: Has the unity experiment reached an impasse that will force a return to partition and separation or the use of federalism? Those who know the secrets of the behind-the-scenes activities are very afraid of a civil war like Somalia's, in which sultans will intervene in party conflicts and tribal disputes. The Socialists accuse President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih of concocting this scenario with outside parties, aimed at escalating the situation and pushing the southerners into separatism. This could only end with military intervention in defense of Yemen's unity and stability. How was this scenario prepared, what are the alliances and balances of power, and where will it lead Yemen?

Sanaa Turns to Fundamentalist Movements, Tribes, and Sultans to Liquidate the Socialist Party

Observers of the Yemeni scene are still trying to learn the factual secrets that the leader of the "southern" Socialist Party and vice president of the unified state, 'Ali Salim al-Bid, brought back from his trip abroad. This trip, which he took right after the parliamentary elections, took him to several world nations, including the United States.

Sources close to 'Ali Salim al-Bid confirm that he learned some very serious information from his American meetings with American and Western experts in Yemeni affairs. He returned with a different view of the future of the unity experiment and the dangers that threaten both it and him. This caused him to return directly to Aden and begin a period of seclusion, starting on 19 August. Nothing gives the impression that it will end peacefully, with dialogue and conciliation, despite all the mediation and optimistic statements that have appeared from time to time. For more than two months, events in Yemen have called for pessimism, not only with regard to dissolving the unity agreement, but also the very serious repercussions that this consequence

bears. They go beyond a return to partition and separation, or even using the option of a federation or confederation, to the danger of an outbreak of a bloody and destructive civil war, kindled by the flames of partisan conflicts, tribal disputes, and foreign interference. This causes many observers to express fear that this war could exceed Lebanon's and reach the level of Somalia's.

Despite indications of optimism that appear from time to time through statements of mediators, or even through the policy of moderation and sincerity that Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih has expressed, hinting at his readiness to offer the necessary commitments to save unity and avert the sacrifice of life and blood, the continual actual events are more of an indication for observers of what Yemen can expect. They see a very dangerous explosion being prepared that will be far different from those honeyed words. Sources close to the Socialist Party believe that a true reading of the situation in Yemen calls for going beyond the declaration of intentions to study the reality of the scheming intentions that are revealed by the actions and policies being pursued. They accuse President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, i.e., the government in Sanaa, of exaggeration in raising and defending the slogans of unity and claiming to ardently adhere to them, while moving secretly in the opposite direction. They say that he is working to escalate and ignite the flames of dispute. Last week, those who are critical of President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih offered new evidence of his secret policy, when they confirmed his responsibility or, at least, the government's responsibility under his orders, for objecting to the procession of Prime Minister Haydar Abu Bakr al-'Attas along the heights of Sanaa. When he returned to the capital to resume dialogue meetings, groups of military police acted provocatively toward him, to the extent of pursuing the motorcade even down al-Sitin Street inside Sanaa. It was clear that the purpose of this action was to escalate the situation further, in circumstances that would aggravate matters and increase their complexity day after day. This would help to increase tension between Sanaa and Aden while, at the same time, President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih's circles stress his eagerness to contain all disputes and overcome difficulties. He has also approved the 18 points that the Socialist Party put forth as a condition of 'Ali Salim al-Bid's return from seclusion. This last issue has poured oil on the fire, kindling more disputes and emphasizing the continuation of the two sides' mutual estrangement and the impossibility of dialogue. Circles close to the Socialist Party have asked how President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih can announce his agreement to the conditions, while his opposing Haydar Abu Bakr al-'Attas's parade reflects continued violation of a basic point in dispute. This point is the interference of military police in security affairs, especially internal security, in addition to the continued militarization of cities and intensified deployment of military forces, especially in Sanaa.

In this atmosphere, informed circles in Sanaa and Aden express fears that the two sides will decide in the end to pursue the return to partition and separation, putting an end to three and one-half years of the unity experiment, which began on 22 May 1990. These circles note that each side uses a different special and tactical way to arrive at this depressing result, considering that the Socialist Party plays an overt game of endorsing the return to federalism and local rule, which was expounded by Salim Salih Muhammad, member of the Presidential Council and assistant secretary

general of the Socialist Party. On the other hand, the game of the Popular General Congress embraces a great deal of noise, suspicions, and questions. These circles say that the Socialist Party has discovered that the ruling party in Sanaa is playing with a well-thought-out mixed deck. Under cover of defending unity and expressing strong enthusiasm for it, it is pursuing a tactic aimed ultimately at squeezing the southerners and forcing them into separatism. At this point, President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih could find an appropriate opportunity to intervene in Aden and occupy it, on behalf of saving unity and protecting the country's higher interests, security, stability, and civil peace. In the end, this would lead to the actual unification of Yemen, but under Sanaa's authority.

Intervention Scenario

'Ali Salim al-Bid supporters stress that he has obtained data confirming this scenario. He has learned that a group from the pro-Iraqi Ba'th Party and Saddam Husayn supporters inside the regime in Sanaa have been pushing in this direction. They have prepared the political and military details to achieve this end. 'Ali Salim al-Bid adds that the Iraqi military experts, who are working beside the Republican Guard in Sanaa, are supervising preparation of military and security plans in this regard.

Socialist Party groups stress their conviction that all events in Yemen over several months are contributing to this scenario. They say that all acts of escalation that have occurred—and will occur—despite repeated invitations to dialogue, are aimed at pursuing this plan to the end. They enumerate a series of actions that have led to increased difficulties and obstacles impeding the unity experiment, and that have bogged down any practical implementation of it. They include a series of assassinations against leaders and prominent figures of the Socialist Party, as well as other acts of intimidation and terrorism.

The insistence of the Popular General Congress in Sanaa on controlling the decision-making sources in the unified government and occupying the most important and sensitive posts has led to Socialist and southern feelings of having been cheated, which have caused them to complain and hint at separation. The fact is that there is an official and unofficial current in southern circles that says bitterly and angrily that the south was the biggest loser in the unification process, whose agreements have not been effectively applied. Some people in Sanaa say that unification was between the Socialist Party and the Congress and, even then, only on the level of the northern governorates, whether with regard to the general treasury or the division of jobs. The Socialist Party has continued to rule the south. Southerners have accused the regime in Sanaa of pursuing a policy of annexation and abrogation against them, of dealing with the southern and eastern governorates as if they were "an annex of Yemen, and as if there were a birthright-Yemeni and a derived-Yemeni and citizens of lower degrees," quoting Brigadier General Baras, chairman of the Preparation Committee for the Hadramawt [meeting]. This impression has been emphasized more than once by Salim Salih Muhammad, criticizing the mentality that "looks at us as if we actually came from outside Yemen." He pointed to the complete ban on the Socialist Party in the north, while the Congress has set up shop in all the governorates, where Congress members are commanders of security, police, and

customs, and officials of the Ministry of Finance. Salim Salih Muhammad got to the nub of the matter when he asked: "How many Socialist Party cadre are there in the Office of the Presidency?" Perhaps this feeling of being cheated is what has caused 'Ali Salim al-Bid and the Socialists to refer more than once to the fact that they made a mistake in agreeing to unity. Southerners add to these elements an important economic factor. Because of this factor, southern Yemen with 3.5 million inhabitants has suffered more than has the north from economic problems. In the south, prices have gone up more, and the inflation rate has reached 600 percent. At the same time, in the north, inflation has been held to 40 percent. There has been no distribution of wealth, specifically oil, and the government has not kept its pledge to establish a free zone in Aden.

In addition to the exorbitant rise in prices and, consequently, increased popular resentment because of living standards, there have been breaches of security and public order and increased acts of violence, especially organized assassinations, which have shown the Socialists that they are the targets. It is worth mentioning that 'Ali Salim al-Bid has not concealed the fact that one of the reasons for his return to Aden and his seclusion there was his fear of meeting the same fate as former North Yemen President Ibrahim al-Hamdi. Al-Hamdi was pro-unity and was killed in mysterious circumstances in October 1977, on the eve of an intended visit to make to Aden. Al-Bid has indicated that al-Hamdi's assassination was "the result of treachery. We must get rid of this deception and trickery."

The Socialist Party's leadership has, more than once, accused elements connected with Sanaa of being behind the assassinations and attempted assassinations, to which more than one party official has been exposed. It has said that those who carried out these acts enjoy the protection of prominent northern officials. The party has made the issue of exposing them and conducting investigations a basic condition with regard to returning to "normalcy."

In the past few days, prominent Socialists have bluntly revealed the existence of a plan aimed at assassinating party figures and leaders in Sanaa, including Minister of Defense Haytham Qasim Tahir, and certain Socialist Party Political Office members. They stress that there is no security for the lives of southern officials in Sanaa. A few days after the discussion of these plans, a senior southern officer was kidnapped by unknown persons who led him away from his room in one of Sanaa's hotels. He had come there from Aden on a mission. Observers believe the case of Lieutenant Colonel Mahmud Mas'ad al-Huraysi, a senior Armed Forces officer, is very serious and intended to stir up discord among individuals of the Armed Forces, which have not only remained un-united, but have also recently been conducting military movements. They are making continuous preparations to guard against any surprise, and have brought back partition—in a way—by placing barrels [at border crossings]. The situation is tense along border areas between north and south, which have previously seen three wars.

Fundamentalists and Sultans

Socialist Party circles accuse the Popular General Congress of carrying out a series of assassinations, for the purpose of further escalating the crisis in accordance with a prepared scenario. They have information that Sanaa, in order to

achieve its escalation strategy, is relying on other factors and elements. The first factor is Islamic extremists. Socialists accuse many of them of fomenting security disturbances in Aden and carrying out assassination attempts against Socialist officials, after having been mobilized against this Marxist party and urged to take revenge against its anti-Islam policy. The Socialists have—more than once before—stressed that Sanaa is giving military and material aid to a number of Yemeni Afghans and mujahidin to carry out operations in the south and to assassinate southern officials in the north. Undoubtedly the Socialist Party, which is afraid of the repercussions from the results achieved by the Reform Alliance in the recent legislative elections, leading Shaykh 'Abdallah al-Ahmar to the chairmanship of the Leadership Council, is even more afraid of a fundamentalist intifadah in the south and the growth of extremist Islamic movements.

The second factor is the split in the south caused by the stirring up of so-called family sensitivities, or the return to inciting the sultans against the Socialist Party, which has nationalized the property of the wealthy and the sultans. At the beginning of this year, the arrest of the sultan of Abyan, Tariq al-Fadli, on the charge of assassinating 'Ali Salih 'Abbad, a member of the Socialist Party's Political Office, stirred up a crisis between Sanaa and Aden. In recent weeks, it was noted that the sultans have returned to provocative activities and intervention in the existing crisis. This clearly began when Sultan Ahmad 'Abdallah al-Fadli, the previous sultan of Abyan, sent a telegram to both President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih and Shaykh 'Abdallah Bin-Husayn al-Ahmar, in which he accused the Socialist Party of working to separate south Yemen, after having confirmed the existence of large oil reserves in its territory.

Perhaps the greatest danger that looms on the Yemeni horizon today is the danger of resumption of tribal conflicts, with some tribes bearing arms against others. Yemen lives today with the fear of the historic conflict between the Hashid and Bakil tribes. According to some, the visit to Aden by Shaykh Sinan Abu-Luhum, who led a large delegation seeking to reconcile points of view, was interference in an alliance between 'Ali Salim al-Bid and the Bakil tribes in the north. These tribes are well known for their animosity against the Hashid tribes, to which President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih and Shaykh al-Ahmar belong.

Some observers believe that the Socialist Party is not unlikely to react against Sanaa at the risk of a bloody war, while security in the south is ensured, thanks to the domination of the cohesive and ideological southern army, considered militarily stronger than the army of the north.

In the last few weeks, it was noted that several tribes and areas have begun to move into the line of conflict and that the dangers of an explosion are increasing. The Hadramawt area, for example, has severely criticized the north and has called for local rule, broad powers, and the enjoyment of privatization. That should be granted to it to make use of the more than 60 percent of Yemeni oil reserves that lie under its territory. Despite the insistence at the Hadramawt meeting on rejecting separation, observers think that this initiative is an indicator that goes beyond putting pressure on Sanaa to save unity. As for the Khawlan tribes that stress they are an indivisible part of the Bakil, they have demanded participation in power, commensurate with their size.

Civil War

At this time, the mobilization campaign continues in the south because of indicators that there is a threat of something that is far beyond separation. This campaign intensified after the assassination attempt in Aden against 'Ali Salim al-Bid's sons, Nayif and Yusuf, and the assassination of his sister's son. Al-Bid's sister waved her son's blood-splattered clothes in his funeral procession, old southern revolutionary anthems were played, and the blue and red-starred party flag waved. The demonstrators shouted for revenge, calling for the return of confrontation lines on the borders and for the bearing of arms against the north, instead of continuing to live like beggars in the unified Yemen. In fact, there is increasing talk about arming the youth and readying armed militias among the citizens.

Together with that, media campaigns and the exchange of accusations between the two sides continue. There are also southerners returning to the north and northerners to the south, along with military reinforcements and reports of arms and experts arriving by this route or that. Observers expect tension to increase during the next few days. They think that the south will continue to work to propose a federation or confederation as the ideal solution to avoid separation and return to partition. However, Socialist Party leaders are convinced that Sanaa will persist in a policy of no alternative to unity from its own perspective, in order to impose domination over both the north and south. These observers expect that, in the next phase, the south will experience security disturbances and widespread acts of assassination and abduction, accompanied by a suffocating economic crisis. The purpose of this is to generate a vast outcry for separation, which would be achieved. Then, Sanaa would intervene. According to the latest information, Sanaa has been arranging strong relations with southern tribes, sultans, and fundamentalist movements. It has ended its negotiations with the former southern president, Nasir Muhammad, to host him in Sanaa, in an attempt to win over the last wave of Socialist old-timers. However, Arab and foreign observers and mediators, who have tried and are trying to obtain conciliation and not allow matters to reach a point of no return, know full well the dangers of continued escalation in this direction, because that will ultimately lead to Yemen's getting into a civil war, whose results and repercussions would be more dangerous by far than all the wars that have previously been fought by the people of this single country.

Petroleum Discoveries Do Not Meet Expectations

94AE0086A London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 5 Feb 94 p 9

[Article by Eric Watkins: "Diminished Quantities of Oil Discoveries in Yemen"]

[Text] Bernard Essotier, president of the Canadian Occidental Petroleum Company, remains optimistic vis-a-vis the Yemeni oil industry, despite the drop in amounts of new oil discoveries in Yemen and the rising cost of continuing exploration.

Essotier also insists that there are large reserves in Yemen, but conceded that the area's secrets cannot be known until additional information is available. He says: "We are continuing to work on an active program of exploration in the concession area granted to us, where we can produce some

oil. We still expect to test small setups. We are working hard and actively to complete this, because these wells are close to our existing facilities."

In view of the fact that the drop in oil prices is negatively affecting the budget earmarked for exploration, the Canadian company is not at present pushing to find large discoveries in the remote parts of their concession area, which totals 37,500 square km [sq km]. Rather, it is concentrating on the smaller discoveries, which can be incorporated economically into the existing facilities.

It is worth mentioning that the oil fields and facilities belonging to the Canadian company are located in the al-Masilah region in Southern Yemen.

These facilities are connected by a 138 km pipeline south to the port of al-Shuhayr on the coast of the Gulf of Aden.

The Canadian partner announced that, since the start of production in September 1993, its concession area has produced 546 million barrels of oil. Production has reached an average of 135,000 barrels per day [bpd], i.e., one-third of Yemen's oil production.

Despite Essotier's doubts that his company's production from its producing fields will increase very much in the coming year, he expressed optimism regarding increased oil discoveries in his company's concession area. He said: "There are still good quantities, particularly in the lower strata," referring to the fact that solid rock bases are located under the higher limestone formations, where oil is usually found. He added: "We have one well that produces 8,000 bpd of excellent quality oil in a natural smooth, stable flow. This indicates a broad area, some of which is connected with others, which encourages us to continue our activities."

In a related development, the Canadian company is exchanging data with other companies that control nearby concession areas, especially with the Clyde, Lasmo, and Nimeyer companies, active to the north and northeast of the al-Masilah fields.

With regard to the Canadian company's discoveries, those active in the oil business think that there is a not inconsiderable amount of oil there, but they have so far been unable to find conclusive evidence. In April 1993, the Total Company announced the discovery of a field that could yield 12,000 bpd, located east of al-Masilah. North of al-Masilah, the Clyde Company is currently evaluating results, after the recent discovery of a field located close to the Canadian company's concession.

It is said that Lasmo has so far dug three wells in which nothing was found, while the Nimeyer Company has just begun to implement its digging program.

With the diminishing possibility of finding major quantities of oil, the oil companies, in order to assure economic feasibility, will be obliged to gradually intensify their exploration programs and concentrate their efforts on small discoveries close to their present facilities.

Nevertheless, workers in the oil business insist that even these modest exploration efforts might be economically unfeasible, in view of the existing agreements with the Yemeni Government, which stipulate participation in production.

IRAN

Kohkiluyeh Province Mines Underutilized

94LA0103E Tehran JAHAN-E ESLAM in Persian
14 Feb 94 p 5

[Text] The general manager of mines and metals for Kohkiluyeh va Boyer Ahmad Province said: The very rich mines in this province are not being exploited in the desired manner due to investment problems.

Engineer Mojtaba Shari'ati added: Since the year 1361 [21 March 1982-20 March 1983] 33 mines have been readied for operation in this province, and 25 exploration projects have also been carried out.

According to him, in the current year mine exploration operations in Kohkiluyeh va Boyer Ahmad Province were done through the use of satellite photographs and information for the first time in the nation's history, with credits of 835 million rials.

He said that this province's important mines include those for silicone, dolomite, copper, phosphate, oxide, decorative and facade stone, salt, fire clay, and celestine.

The general manager of mines and metals for Kohkiluyeh va Boyer Ahmad noted: The assays for the ores in this province's mines are generally above standard.

He added: The celestine mines in Kohkiluyeh va Boyer Ahmad are considered to be among the world's richest, with proven capacities of 2 million tons and assayed at 92 percent by foreign and domestic experts.

Engineer Shari'ati added: The province's phosphate mines, with reserves of 400 million tons and assayed at 12 percent, have been recognized as being among the nation's best phosphate mines. Likewise, the presence of 200 million tons of dolomite reserves assayed at 23 percent presents favorable conditions for the construction of factories to produce dolomite fire clay.

He said: The task of completing the exploration for copper mines, along with the accompanying elements such as silver with 192 "PPM" is being carried out in the province, and with the identification of mines for facade and decorative stone with high reserves and quality, it is necessary to invest to activate these mines.

He added: Utilization of the province's bauxite mines, with reserves of 10 million tons assayed at 54 percent, could play an effective role in creating prosperous economic and social conditions in the Province of Kohkiluyeh va Boyer Ahmad.

Engineer Shari'ati said the province has significant reserves of marl and limestone. He said: The mines in Dasht-e Rum of Boyer Ahmad, with the capacity to produce 2,000 tons per day, can meet the needs of a cement factory for 150 years.

He noted the abundance of gypsum mines in the Kohkiluyeh va Boyer Ahmad Province. He said the Karik gypsum in Boyer Ahmad, with its 100-percent purity, could be used for medicinal and export purposes.

Iran Insurance Company's Activities Detailed

94LA0103G Tehran JAHAN-E ESLAM in Persian
10 Feb 94 p 2

[Text] News Service—Dr. Delju, executive director of the Iran Insurance Company, gave a press conference yesterday, Wednesday morning, in which he discussed this organization's performance for the year.

He discussed the anniversary of last year's passenger aircraft disaster. He said: Damages have been paid to the survivors of 106 of the 119 people who were killed. The files on six of them are being studied and the survivors of the other seven disaster victims have not yet come forward.

Dr. Delju said: The Iran Insurance Company is prepared to pay the damages for these seven people if their survivors come forward.

Concerning the insurance on the air travelers, he said: According to the insurance laws, every aircraft passenger has \$20,000 in insurance coverage, \$400 in coverage for accompanying goods, and another \$400 in coverage for the traveler's personal effects.

Dr. Delju said: About 40 million rials has been paid to the survivors of each of the crash victims.

The executive director of the Iran Insurance Company discussed the fact that one-third of the personnel of this company are people who have sacrificed for the Islamic revolution. Mr. Mohammad-Khani, minister of economic affairs and finance, has said: The file on the affairs of those who have sacrificed who work for the Iran Insurance Company has been compiled, and the problems of these dear ones will be addressed.

Continuing, he said: The Iran Insurance Company has taken steps to implement the policy of expanding and improving its service network by increasing the number of its branches and representatives throughout the country.

He added: The Iran Insurance Company had 74 branch offices in the year 1369 [21 March 1980-20 March 1981], and this number has now been increased to 108 branch offices. In the near future five offices will be opened in the cities of Abhar, Nehavand, Babolsar, Ramsar, and Bandar-e Turkman.

Dr. Delju said: To provide coverage to deprived areas and municipalities, the Iran Insurance Company, with the cooperation of the postal service of the Islamic Republic of Iran, has established 176 representatives in the municipalities, and the insurance operations will be conducted through these postal offices. He discussed the Iran Insurance Company's operations on international markets. He said: The Iran and England Insurance Company in London has increased its capital from 10 to 20 million English pounds, and this in itself has created special privileges for this company so that we can be present in the international markets with greater capability.

He added: For the second time, the Iran Insurance Company won an international bidding competition in one of the Persian Gulf nations, and this in itself illustrates our active involvement internationally. In conclusion, Dr. Delju said: In the first nine months of the current year [21 March-21 December 1993] the Iran Insurance Company increased its damage payments 60 percent compared to the same period the previous year.

Increase in Mining Activities Reported

94LA0103D Tehran JAHAN-E ESLAM in Persian
14 Feb 94 p 5

[Text] During the year 1371 [21 March 1992-20 March 1993] more than 2,043 mines were operating in the country, and this figure shows a 6.4-percent growth over the year 1370 [21 March 1991-20 March 1992].

Hamid Zowqifard, general manager of the Office of Statistics and Technical Information in the Ministry of Mines and Metals, announced the above in an interview with IRNA. He added: In the first six months of the current year [21 March-23 September 1993] more than 744,921 tons of rock coal was extracted by the units under the mantle of this ministry, a 19.2-percent increase over the same period in the year 1371 [21 March-23 September 1992].

Likewise the copper, manganese and chromite extracted in the first six months of the year 1372 [21 March-23 September 1993] from the nation's mines was 5,198,754 million tons, 26,682 tons, and 33,678 tons, respectively, increases of 7.4 percent for copper ore, 36 percent for manganese ore, and 100 percent for chromite ore from the same period the previous year.

According to Zowqifard, in the first six months of the current year [21 March-23 September 1993] more than 1,887,427 tons of steel ingots were produced, representing growth of 25.8 percent compared to the same period the previous year.

The general manager of the Office of Statistics and Technical Information in the Ministry of Mines and Metals discussed the comparative production statistics for the years 1371 [21 March 1992-20 March 1993] and 1370 [21 March 1991-20 March 1992] in the areas of lead and zinc. He said: Last year 1,081,827 tons of lead and zinc were produced, an increase of about 37.3 percent over the year 1370.

Likewise, the production of decorative and facade stone and low grade stone [sang-e lasheh] for construction increased 12 percent and 45.2 percent, respectively, in the year 1371 [21 March 1992-20 March 1993] compared to the year 1370 [21 March 1991-20 March 1992].

He announced the willingness of the Office of Statistics and Technical Information in the Ministry of Mines and Metals to cooperate with the nation's organizations and universities. He said: Last year and this year this ministry cooperated with the Iran Statistics Center to carry out the 1371 [21 March 1992 -20 March 1993] Joint Census of Mines.

Zowqifard explained that the Office of Statistics and Technical Information in the Ministry of Mines and Metals is equipped with the most modern computer system. He said: Likewise, this ministry's library has been equipped with a computer system.

In conclusion, he said the spread of the culture of statistics in this country is important. He said: It is necessary to be aware of the latest statistics and figures in order to activate the nation's potential abilities.

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